

Home Alone

When Can Children be Left Home by Themselves?

Some experts recommend age 10 as the minimum. All children are different. A parent or guardian needs to consider the child's ability to be safe and feel secure when left alone for any period of time.

Things to consider ...

How does my child feel about being alone?

How long will my child be alone?

What are the risks my child might face if left alone?

- ✓ Review safety information.
- ✓ Check and correct safety hazards; lock up firearms, put away matches, etc
- ✓ Provide routine telephone numbers, and rehearse with children how to call 911 in an emergency, including knowing name, address and directions.
- ✓ Review basic first aid. Have a first aid kit where they can find it.
- ✓ Set ground rules so they will know what you expect; use of appliances, whether friends can visit, etc.
- ✓ Review safety rules; no playing with matches, guns, knives, etc.
- ✓ Instruct child not to tell callers they are alone. They should say that their parent is busy, and offer to take a message.
- ✓ Warn child never to allow stranger(s) into the house.
- ✓ Make plans with a relative, friend or neighbor who can be called for help.

Adapted with permission from *Children At Home Alone*, a pamphlet of Parent to Parent of NH, Bureau of Special Medical Services, NH Department of Health & Human Services



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Children's Hospital at Dartmouth, Injury Prevention Center, NH Department of Health and Human Services, NH Department of Education, NH Pediatric Society, SAFE KIDS NH & Partnership for a DrugFreeNH.org